

Hopefully, at tomorrow's summit, that issue will be renewed. But the papers in this town say that that issue is dead. I think not, because in America we do have public options today—they're not readily available to all of us unless you happen to be 65—and that public option is Medicare. If you happen to be a Federal employee, like I and others in this room, you have a public option available to you. If you're in the military, you have a public option available to you, a military family.

Public options are widely available in America. We need to provide that option for every American. We need real competition. We need WellPoint Blue Cross of California to have a competitor. They have none today.

Fortunately, this House, today, took a step to end the monopoly, to end the antitrust exemption that the health insurance companies have. It will help, but it will not provide the solution that we need. We need that public option. We need the health care reform that this House passed. And hopefully tomorrow, at the President's summit, the outcome will say, follow the lead of the House; give us a public option, give us the controls on prices, give us the steps toward staying healthy, and let's finally put this Nation into a universally available health care system.

GREATER FLEXIBILITY FOR FLORIDA FISHERMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this week I met with commercial and recreational fishermen from my Congressional district of the Florida Keys. These hardworking men and women have taken time out of their busy season to travel up here to Washington, D.C., to protest the latest round of onerous and unfair Federal fishing regulations and closures.

Florida's recreational fishing industry is the largest in the Nation. Its economic impact to our State exceeds \$5.3 billion, and more than 54,000 jobs are generated by this industry. Similarly, Florida's commercial fishing industry is nearly 13,000 strong and contributes a staggering \$1.2 billion to our economy.

Our fishermen understand that maintaining a robust, healthy fishery through appropriate regulation is the key to their economic success. However, the recent fishing bans on red snapper and shallow water grouper enacted by the South Atlantic Fisheries Council are devastating to our Florida fishing industry. The bans not only threaten the jobs of recreational and commercial fishermen, but also the small business owners that support and economically benefit from these industries.

Local restaurants will look to carry more cost-affordable fish from countries such as Mexico and the Domini-

can Republic, as opposed to featuring fresh, Florida-caught fish, crab, and lobster. Hotels, dive shops, and other tourist attractions will also continue to suffer as fishing enthusiasts decide to travel elsewhere.

The impact of this multibillion dollar industry on the State of Florida cannot be overstated. And yet, one by one, these fishermen are being regulated out of business.

I'm a cosponsor of a bill known as the Transparency in Job Loss from Fishery Closures Act, and this is a bill introduced by my colleague, Congressman HENRY BROWN. This bipartisan bill instructs NOAA to reverse the harmful fishing closures and calls for stricter policies before implementing further closings.

In particular, this bill requires that NOAA conduct a comprehensive review of recent fishery closures and provides sufficient updated research showing that a closure is the only option to maintain the fishery. In this review, NOAA must consider the impact of each closure on the coastal communities being regulated, including the impact on their small businesses and the losses of the jobs that would entail these closures.

I also support efforts to increase fisheries research to improve enforcement systems and to reform the flawed Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.

I'm a cosponsor of a bill introduced by Congressman FRANK PALLONE, which would amend Magnuson to provide greater flexibility to State regulators and fishery managers.

The process of collecting data utilized by Federal regulators in determining fishing closures also needs to be revisited.

The Scientific and Statistics Committees need to conduct their business in an open, transparent forum that also considers input from the fishing industry. What a concept. Opening up this committee to stakeholders' feedback and congressional oversight will go a long way in repairing the trust between regulators and local fishermen.

In this stagnant economy, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we do all that we can to protect a historic and much needed industry from economic disaster. Our Nation's fishermen deserve and require our immediate action.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE JOHN MURTHA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to the memory of one of my close friends, one of my colleagues, my partner, and a man with whom I have spent so many hours, so many days and for so many years as we've worked together on the National Defense Appropriations bill, and I'm speaking of the late Chairman Jack Murtha.

In keeping with his legislative management style, I'll be brief because, as we presented our Defense Appropriations bills, the last meeting that we would have somewhere in the Chamber here would be, Hey, look, this is a good bill. It's not controversial. Let's pass it quick. We ought to be able to get it done in 8 or 10 minutes, which we normally did.

Jack was a good leader, a good chairman. When we had discussions on the hundreds and hundreds of issues in that bill, his concern always was what is best to keep America safe, what is best to keep Americans safe, and what is best to give our soldiers the tools that they need, the technology that they need to do their job, to carry out their mission, and to protect themselves while they're doing that.

I expressed my condolences and my sadness to his wife, Joyce, and their children. I know of the sadness that they experienced here a couple of weeks ago as Jack left the Congress, left the family, and left this life. I really was saddened and regretted and felt extremely bad that I was not able to attend his funeral, but Beverly and I had a tragic event of our own during that same period.

But I wanted to mention that Beverly, my wife, knew Jack Murtha very well because we would oftentimes be at the same military hospital with him visiting troops, wounded troops and their families. And I remember the first day that my wife ever ran into Jack Murtha at Walter Reed Hospital, and she had been talking with the wife of a soldier who had serious physical problems, but the family had financial problems.

□ 1715

She said, Hey, Mr. Murtha, give me your wallet. And Jack Murtha took out his wallet and handed it to her, and she took out all of the money and handed it to the soldier's wife and then gave Jack back his empty wallet. And so she also had a special relationship.

But we were not able to attend Jack's funeral. During that same period of time, my son Billy and his wife, Ashley, had become pregnant some time ago, and everybody was excited about that. And then one day, they picked us up at the airport coming back from Washington, and we had lunch together. And they announced that they had just been to the doctor, and we were going to have twin granddaughters. You talk about being excited and cheers and tears. But that was not to be. Twenty weeks into the pregnancy, something happened.

Things went wrong. The two little girls, Taylor Ann and Riley Grace, were born alive and lived only a couple of hours until their little hearts quit beating.

And so we were going through that same grief at about the same time that Joyce and her family were going through the grief of losing Jack Murtha.

I lost a friend, Congress lost a powerful legislator. He didn't speak on the floor very often. He was never boisterous. You never saw him—well, seldom—shouting and waving his arms, but he knew what was going on. And he affected what was happening in the legislation.

Some of our colleagues used to joke that he would sit back in this corner while I sat back in that corner so that between the two of us, we could watch everything that was happening in the House Chamber at any given time. Well, there might have been something to that, but it was a good relationship.

So I, again, I express my condolences. My own sadness of losing this friend, of losing this great American. And Mr. Speaker, I think Jack has left an emptiness that probably will not be filled for a long time, if ever. And I think those on the House floor, as we proceed with appropriations bills in the future, will recognize that without Jack Murtha here, things are a lot different.

So God bless the family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMEMBERING REPRESENTATIVE JACK P. MURTHA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a friend and mourn and share the loss not just to the Murtha family, the State of Pennsylvania, but to the entire Nation, and certainly every man and woman wearing a uniform.

I was proud to know Jack Murtha, proud to serve in the U.S. Congress with Jack Murtha. He was a bipartisan guy. He was a knowledgeable guy. He was a hardworking guy.

The military budget in appropriations is over \$500 billion. It is a very thick bill. You have to know airplanes from submarines, from tanks to battleships. Jack Murtha knew that, and he would study it very deeply.

Jack Murtha, though, beyond being a professional Congressman, taught this Chamber many things.

For one thing, I learned as a guy who came up through some partisan battles and some nonpartisan battles that the

Murtha-McDade relationship almost cast a certain circle around the State of Pennsylvania that made it a special place, that the Pennsylvania delegation had something that the other States did not have, and that was two great leaders—Republican and Democrat—who kind of set the tone not just for the entire State but for the rest of us to see how things could be. And indeed, the Pennsylvania delegation has still had great fellowship because of that legacy.

It was also reflected in his relationship with BILL YOUNG. I can't tell you what a joy it has been for all Members of Congress who come and often see the battles that are so epitomized on the talk shows and the name calling and so forth, and you think that is Congress. And then you go into a committee room and you see BILL YOUNG and Jack Murtha working together, not always agreeing but always affectionate and always having great respect for what the other one had to say.

And indeed, I can tell you as somebody who served here 18 years, sometimes you couldn't tell who was chairman. They were that close and that united and that focused on what was best for the troops. What a great relationship. And again, what a great example for the rest of us.

Jack Murtha was an old-school guy. He liked to have his bill done in a hurry. In fact, the chairman, Mr. OBEY is there, and he knows while it was one of the largest bills, it was also one of the fastest bills to be passed so many times. He knew exactly where he wanted to go long before the hearing started.

I remember I had an amendment that had to do with electronic verification of social security numbers for people working on Federal contracts. The chairman didn't like it. And I remember Mr. Murtha—I submitted it, I worked the committee, the subcommittee very carefully, and he said, "Kingston, we're not going to do that." That was it. That was my hearing. And when he said that, you knew that was it. The curtain was closed. The case was over.

And this same chairman could turn around and say to you, you've got a problem in Hinesville, Georgia, little old Hinesville, Georgia, a speck on the map, that because it's the home of Fort Stewart, the 3rd Infantry was expecting two more brigades, went out and built a lot of roads and schools and infrastructure in preparation for another brigade.

And then the Pentagon made a turn and decided not to send it to them. And who stood up for Hinesville, Georgia? Jack Murtha. Who did I go to and say, Look, if we're going to make this happen, we've got to do something to help these people because the Pentagon has done them wrong. They stood tall for the military but now the military has let them down. We're not going to let that happen. And Jack Murtha pulled through. Not just on that issue but time and time again.

Jack Murtha loved the United States of America. Jack Murtha loved the military. Jack Murtha loved the soldiers. He stood up not just for them, but for their families over and over again.

Congress has lost a great leader, as has the State and the United States of America. But the American soldiers have lost a true friend and a passionate guy who would do anything for the man and woman in uniform.

I say God bless Jack Murtha and his memory and everything he has done for the United States of America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHUSTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. MURTHA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiments of my colleagues here today and want to add my voice in tribute to Jack Murtha—our colleague, my chairman, and my friend.

For nearly his entire adult life, Jack Murtha selflessly served his beloved Nation—first in uniform as a decorated combat marine and later as an elected representative from my neighboring State of Pennsylvania.

We all know by now that he was the first Vietnam War combat veteran elected to Congress. And while many of us followed him to Congress, he rose to become chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Defense. I've had the honor of serving with him on the subcommittee for over 10 years.

In our dealings over the years, Jack and I did not always agree on policy decisions. But I always respected his undeniable dedication and his refreshing candor.

And there is no doubt that he cared most deeply about the men and women of America's military and their families. He understood their challenges and their anxieties. And what he did not understand, he actively sought to learn in trips to Defense Department facilities, forward operating bases, and military medical centers across the world.

He served our men and women in uniform diligently and daily in countless